

Dear Judge Bell,

1/14/2024

I write to you in regard of my Son- Chad Caesar. I realize his case is very serious. I don't downplay that in any way, although I would also say that it doesn't represent the person that Chad is. He's always been a hardworking, dependable, compassionate and upstanding person. If you were someone in need of help with something- you'd want Chad as a friend! He has dealt with depression through the years and lost his father as a teen. His dad didn't 'die'- he was sick a few years, then had a Liver Transplant (Jackson Memorial-Miami). He almost died during surgery, lost a great deal of blood which left him with brain damage. He has the mental capacity of a 10-year-old. I have been both Mom & Dad for Chad since. A teenage boy really needs a father! It wasn't easy for us. Not saying this as an excuse, as I always felt that it greatly affected Chad- how could it not? Chad went on to do above average in school- St. Thomas Aquinas HS- Ft. Laud. In HS Chad did volunteer service hours with the Big Brother Program. He played Baseball, Basketball & Soccer for school and at times, city leagues too. He took music lessons once a week a few blocks from home. We stayed busy! At 14 Chad begged me to let him get a job. I told him many times that he was too young- no one would hire him. I finally took him to the local mall thinking it would prove to him that he needed to be older to get hired. We walked the mall where he was turned down continuously. We then went into a Chinese Restaurant (Jade Garden) where much to my surprise- they hired him! Two nights a week- busboy! He had to wear a white dress shirt, black pants and they gave him dinner those 2 nights. He worked there until summer when he then went to work for a movie theater where he worked the lobby food counter, or he ran the movie reels from above the seating area- he loved this job! He brought home a hamster from work one day. Some boys let it loose in the theater as a joke! It was almost killed! After graduation he went to community college (BCC) and started working full time. Chad has a great work ethic and responsibility which I believe he learned from his parents- both of which worked for Motorola, Inc. Plantation, FL- from the time they were age 18 and up to that time. Dad a total of 28 yrs, mom ended at 31 yrs. Chad met his wife Maggie at the condo building where Chad owned a unit and Maggie rented a unit after graduating college- USF. They married in March 2014, and had 2 daughters born 2016 & 2018. Maggie wanted to live in North Carolina where her family lived. They moved to Hickory in 2019, moving away from Florida - the only place Chad had known, and away from his family and friends. Chad would do anything for his family and loves his children above all else! At times I feel the worst decision he ever made was to move to NC! He is a great dad, and I don't think anyone would dispute that. They separated Oct. 1, 2021, and did 50/50 timesharing on their own. Chad was distraught trying to get his family back together- Maggie refused any reconciliation. She found a boyfriend after a mere 3 mths of separation- is still with him today. My thoughts are that this led Chad to dark places, although it's pure speculation on my part, but I know my son. Chad eventually checked himself into a Mental Health Facility in Port St. Lucie FL. He was also seeing Dr. Thompson monthly at Apogee Health in Hickory up to the time of incarceration. I feel that with what Chad has experienced, just before & during incarceration that he would absolutely steer clear of 'anything' that could get him into trouble again. I'd Bet my Life on It!! I told Chad to call me every other day while in jail as I

fear for his safety. After the beating he just endured- I'd say I'm right to feel that way! He's very remorseful and worried for his children's futures – as am I. He never wants to re-live this again. He has said that not only sitting behind bars but also with nothing but 4 walls to stare at for weeks in Medical, it has given him much time to reflect on his life. He feels he has ruined his life / lost everything. In many respects he has. There are things that he wishes he had handled better. His life was very different in Fla- he was happy and content. We had family dinner Sundays at my home where my husband Curt would cook great meals. Our family is very close knit. Chad doesn't blame anyone but himself and has apologized profusely for mistakes and what he's put our family through. From the time both my children were small – when something happened, I would tell them to 'tell the truth' – 'don't lie to me'. I also told them- We don't like Liars and if you own up to what you did- there may not be a punishment at all! That worked well for us. Chad has always owned up to his mistakes. I think that this experience would make anyone grateful for the life that they had/have. I also think they'd make every effort to improve themselves and to help others along the way– I honestly & truly believe that is Chad! Chad is a Positive Thinker- I've always loved that about him. With the future he's facing upon release it won't be an easy road, his life will always be a struggle after this. He still looks forward for the opportunity to prove to his doubters that he will go on to do good things. His family knows Chad is strong willed and a man of his word- so we believe in him!

I would never tell Chad this, but as his mother – I'd almost wish for more time inside if it could somehow trade off not having charges loom over him the rest of his life! I feel that living with and having to deal with the consequences of his charges/conviction will prove far more difficult and costly to him than doing prison time! On the other hand, I also feel that it doesn't do anyone, especially Chad- any good having to serve for an extended period of time! I'm certainly conflicted over this! An extended period won't change what's happened or even make a difference if prolonged. What Chad has endured during months of incarceration along with the future challenges he faces are more detrimental than what serving time could ever do. Chad needs relevant programs and to continue seeing mental health professionals- something he hasn't had since incarceration! It's highly unlikely that he will ever again have a good job. I may be wrong but think that Chad's charges are at the lower end of the scale. I of course hope that can weigh favorably. Maggie and their children live in the marital home, so we have no idea where he will be able to live. Registering as a sex offender will always be a major issue with that. We thought as a last result, he could live with his stepfather & I in Florida, but we live in a 55+ community (Valencia Lakes) and sex offenders aren't allowed to reside with us.

What Chad downloaded onto his computer was wrong and what he downloaded depicted abuse of children. As a mother & grandmother it breaks my heart, and my heart goes out to all those victims. It was the biggest mistake of Chad's life. He will regret it and carry it with him for the rest of his life. I neither condone nor minimize what he has done. I can only pray that Chad gets opportunity for release as you see fit and as a family we can heal and become stronger together. Chad has the support of our whole family, and this experience has taught us all many lessons.

I respectfully ask you to please consider my statements above when you place Sentence upon Chad.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane Cowan", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Diane Fay Cowan
15766 Crystal Waters Drive
Wimauma, Florida 33598
dcowan13@gmail.com
954-325-0190

PS- While my writing of this letter Chad was beaten badly, inmates found out his charges (1-15-24). It's on video- '7' men involved! He was hospitalized for a short time- then spent 3 weeks in Medical at Robert A. Deyton Facility. I realize it's prison- inmates are there as punishment, but they should be able to serve time safely! Chad is not at all a rough & tough, streetwise kind of guy. As a mother- I worry about another attack on my son!

Curtis R. Cowan, P.A.
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February 15, 2024

The Honorable Kenneth D. Bell
United States District Judge
Western District of North Carolina
7200 Charles R. Jonas Federal Bldg.
401 West Trade Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

Re: Sentencing of Chad Caesar

Dear Judge Bell:

I am a Florida Board Certified Marital and Family Law attorney. I know full well the effects mental health and crime can have on a family and person. I deal with it every day. I am also Chad Caesar's stepfather. I want you to know Chad from my perspective.

Chad was born and raised in Florida. Chad's father was strict but nonetheless involved in Chad's life. When Chad was about eleven or twelve, his father became ill, eventually had a liver transplant, and suffered some significant frontal lobe brain damage. Although I did not know Chad or his mother at the time, I'm sure it had a negative impact on Chad. His father is still alive, but no longer effectively involved in Chad's life.

I met Chad shortly after I met his mother, now Diane Cowan, in 2001. Chad was just sixteen and a sophomore in high school. To me, Chad was a typical teenager, yet was well-mannered and respectful. He was in no way resentful of me – to the contrary Chad seemed to like me very much. Chad lived with his mother and me through high school and for almost a year after his graduation in 2003. His mother and I helped Chad purchase a condo only two miles away from us. Chad met his wife, Maggie, while living at the condo. Chad and Maggie both lived with us for a short time until they moved into the house they purchased together (also very close by) to start their own family. The only Chad I have ever seen or known is a smart, caring, loving person with a heart of gold and a great sense of humor. Just have a dinner with him and I guarantee he will make you both smile and laugh out loud.

Chad and Maggie gave birth to their daughter Charlotte in March of 2016 and their daughter Harper in June of 2018. I am very proud Charlotte and Harper call me "Grampy."

My wife, "Grammy," retired from Motorola in 2008 after 31 years, and eventually took daily care of Charlotte and then Harper so that both Chad and Maggie could work. I cooked a family dinner every Sunday at our house. Our family Sunday dinners included

Chad's sister Amber and her husband Rick and their twins Izzy and Elias. The family is a loving and close family.

In November of 2019, Chad and Maggie moved to Hickory, North Carolina to be closer to Maggie's family. I don't think the move was easy for Chad. He knew no one up there. All his friends and family remained in South Florida. Chad worked from his home, limiting his opportunity to meet new friends. Chad could go days or weeks at a time without leaving his home, except to buy groceries or take or pick up the kids from school. It was then I learned that Chad was suffering from depression. Although his mother was aware of his depression for some time, I did not see it at all.

We were all surprised when Chad decided he needed to move out of the house for a while. Maggie begged him not to go, but Maggie more than anyone at the time knew Chad was suffering from depression. Chad moved out and at first Maggie was heartbroken. After a few months, Chad realized he had made a mistake and wanted to reconcile and move back home. The problem was Maggie had moved on. It was too late. There was never any animosity between Maggie and Chad, no anger – just hurt. As a family-law attorney, I know this is rare, but usually a very good rare. Maggie trusted Chad as a great father, and Chad is a great father. Chad and Maggie were sharing the children 50/50, and they communicated well about them. There was just one major problem. Chad desperately wanted to move back and restore his family, and his inability to do so worsened his depression.

Chad blamed himself and knew it was his mistake. He was even more alone living in Hickory by himself, seeing his kids only 50% of the time, working only from home, and having no local family or friends. Chad became more and more depressed. He talked about suicide, and the family panicked. Maggie alerted his mother, who alerted his sister and brother-in-law. He was in a dark place, and I believe that is when he viewed bad things on the internet. Of course, none of us knew it. Chad's mother started traveling regularly to visit him. He was encouraged to get help, and he did. Chad sought therapy and was prescribed medication. On several occasions, Chad was encouraged by family to check himself into a facility, and, eventually, when he was at rock bottom, he did.

At a facility in Florida, Chad finally got the help he needed, and his medication was properly adjusted. When he returned, he expressed new hope and commitment. He had a positive outlook. However, very shortly thereafter, he was arrested, and Chad's world and his family's world changed forever. During the darkest days and deepest depression, and before he got help, Chad committed a serious and despicable crime. Chad knows it, and he owns it. He fully takes responsibility. Chad knows he must be punished. Chad accepts punishment.

The issue is not whether he should be punished, but how severely he should be punished. I firmly believe the illegal media Chad possessed was obtained when he was in a deeply depressed state, which caused him to explore the dark web at a time when

suicide was on his mind. It's not an excuse; it's just a fact. Yet, Chad got help to lessen that deep depression. Chad didn't give up then, and he is not giving up now.

Chad has a family who loves and supports him and who needs him. Chad is not the only one being punished. Chad's children need him. Chad's adult record is spotless. He was an honest, contributing member of society, and only a long prison term will keep him from being one again in the future. As a prisoner he drains society. Outside he can contribute to society. This does not mean there should be no prison time, but I request it be minimal, no more than necessary to prevent recurrence, which will never happen again.

I realize this is *not* a victimless crime even though Chad himself did not create or participate in the making of the illegal images he possessed. The exploitation of children is despicable, and possessing pictures of such contributes to the exploitation. Exploitation would not exist if there were no market for it. That fact is not lost on me or Chad. However, I believe Chad would be a great advocate against such exploitation, and when he is released, I will see that he is and that he makes a difference.

In addition to being in jail for the past nine months, Chad was severely physically beaten by other inmates when they discovered the nature of his crime. While I know the system does not condone such cruel punishment, that is what Chad has endured so far.

The system may see Chad as just another criminal. I get it. But his family and I see him as a very good person, a son, a father, and a brother, who went off the rails one time. He just needs and deserves a second chance and the sooner the better for all.

I ask that you sentence him appropriately after considering all relevant factors. I don't envy your job, but I ask for as much leniency as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Curtis R. Cowan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Curtis" being more prominent.

Curtis R. Cowan, Esq.

To Judge Bell,

1/24/24

My name is Steven J. Lesniak, it has been my pleasure to know Chad and his family for over 25 years. When I first met Chad we had common interest in saltwater fish/reef keeping. We would go on trips to the Florida Keys to collect fish and invertebrates for our salt water fish tanks. He is a fantastic guy, always there to help whenever I needed it. So much so, that I hired him when I was a warehouse manager. He was a diligent worker, never called out and when asked to do something that was not in his job description, he was always happy to help. When I heard about what happened, I was like 'no way- not Chad'! Now in recent years he has had some personal setbacks- we all have! His happiness was always with his family. Well, that ended in a separation, and he was completely devastated as any father would be. I'm not here to make excuses for him. All I'm asking is- with the way the world is today, I believe he needs help more than punishment. That decision is yours to make. I have no doubts and know in my heart that Chad is a good person and father. I would really hate to see his children grow up not having him in their lives. Thank You for your time and reading my letter. Hopefully, we can all do our part to help Chad?

Sincerely,
Steven J. Lesniak
6861 McClellan Street
Hollywood, FL. 33024
954-747-8657

Chad's character letter

Matthew Kelly <kempoman67@gmail.com>

Wed 2/14/2024 12:06 PM

To: Karen Gerber <karen@karengerberlaw.com>

I met Chad about a month before his last arrest at the High Noon AA group in Hickory North Carolina. I talked with him got him a big book (Alcoholics Anonymous) and he asked me to be his sponsor. He has done everything I suggested so far to the best of his ability. We all do horrible things drinking especially in blackouts and Chad knows he was wrong. Considering the circumstances he is doing better than expected. The jails need meetings in them again but we are working with what we have. That's about all I can honestly say about the situation with Chad.

Thank You

Matthew Kelly

704 397 8653

kempoman67@gmail.com

Caesar character letter

jrmcarthur2012 <jrmcarthur2012@yahoo.com>

Sun 2/11/2024 2:40 PM

To: Karen Gerber <karen@karengerberlaw.com>

Hello Karen,

Attached/ included please find a character letter for Chad Caesar as requested.

If need be, feel free to contact me.

Regards,

James McArthur

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Subject: Chad Caesar

Your Honor,

I'd like to address the court regarding a defendant currently in front of the court. The defendant is Chad Caesar.

Chad replied to an advertisement that I'd placed in February 2023 looking for a roommate. When I met Chad, I was struck by his humility and openness. As I came to know him better, I was made aware of the error of judgement on his part. I witnessed binge drinking and believe that he was self medicating to relieve the pain of his guilt. At my advice, he began rehabilitating himself by attending AA meetings, found a sponsor, and immersing himself in their program and the Bible. I began to see him as he really was; an individual who regretted his actions and took it upon himself to atone in any way possible. He is an intelligent, hardworking, caring, and warm hearted person at his core; the only way to describe his being separated from his two daughters is heartbroken. I firmly believe that he is fully aware of his transgression, the view that society takes on said act, and the ramifications for his actions. I also believe that the last year has been Chad's 'rock bottom' and he is fully prepared to accept his fate and rebuild his life.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have.

Respectfully,

James R. McArthur  
604 Hawthorne Street  
Hudson, NC., 28638  
(717) 891-9164  
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Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone